



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS

M. JODI RELL
GOVERNOR

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Governor Rell Issues Executive Order to Prepare State for Homeland Security Exercise

Governor M. Jodi Rell has issued an Executive Order to ensure that state agencies are ready for an April emergency preparedness drill designed to test preparedness and coordination at the local, state and national levels.

The Governor's Order directs agencies to take key steps to prepare for the third congressionally mandated Top Officials (TOPOFF3) exercise, scheduled to take place April 4-10 in New London. State and local responders will be joined by officials from New Jersey, federal agencies and the government of the United Kingdom in demonstrating a coordinated response to a weapons of mass destruction attack.

"The world will be watching how we respond to this security exercise," Governor Rell said. "Our internal communications will be thoroughly tested. This Order aims to make sure that we employ the best technology and that we are sharing that technology with all appropriate state agencies. We should expect excellence in this drill if we expect to respond swiftly and effectively to a genuine homeland security emergency."

The Governor's Order makes specific reference to the need for emergency responders to be precise when attempting to gather information on a target location.

"We must have the technology to create maps and informational profiles about any specific area," Governor Rell said.

The Order seeks to assure that this map-making technology, called geospatial data technology, is being effectively used by Connecticut's emergency preparedness officials.

"In emergency situations, a host of crucial decisions – decisions that could spell the difference between life and death – are made based on the physical information we have on a site," Governor Rell said. "We cannot overstate the importance of communication and the sharing of information during these times. This will require a formal network."

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The Order creates a Governor's Interim Geospatial Council to coordinate and promote technology and sharing of geospatial information.

"This Council will report to me," Governor Rell said. "It will submit a report containing legislative recommendations to establish a permanent council within the State to manage the network on geospatial data and technology."

The Council will include representatives from the following agencies:

- Connecticut State University System
- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Economic and Community Development
- Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security
- Department of Environmental Protection
- Department of Information Technology
- Department of Public Health
- Department of Public Safety
- Department of Public Utility Control
- Department of Public Works
- Department of Transportation
- Office of Policy and Management
- University of Connecticut

"We must constantly be looking for ways to make our response system stronger," Governor Rell said. "Only by putting our homeland security and emergency management officials through the most challenging scenarios can we learn our strengths and weaknesses. Only by integrating domestic preparedness with the policies of state agencies can we stay at the forefront of emergency response methods and maximize our ability to avoid tragedy."

The Council will be able to apply for federal funding grants and must meet in January to elect a chairperson and adopt bylaws.